



Presupposition in the Lyrics of 'Erika': A Pragmatic Study of Assumptions in a Controversial Context

Presuposisi dalam Lirik Lagu 'Erika': Studi Pragmatik tentang Asumsi dalam Konteks yang Kontroversial

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Abstrak

Presuposisi dalam lirik lagu 'Erika' dianalisis dengan menerapkan teori presuposisi dari George Yule dalam kajian pragmatik. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis jenis-jenis presuposisi dalam lagu tersebut serta mendeskripsikan bagaimana asumsi-asumsi implisit memengaruhi interpretasi audiens dan kontroversi publik. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif karena makna implisit dalam lirik disampaikan melalui lagu. Sumber data penelitian ini adalah lirik lagu "Erika" atau "Goyang Erika, Cinta 25 Karat" oleh Orkes Semi Dangdut (OSD) Himpunan Mahasiswa Tambang (HMT) Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB). Data dikumpulkan melalui metode dokumentasi dan studi pustaka. Hasil analisis menunjukkan dua jenis presuposisi, yaitu presuposisi eksistensial dan presuposisi leksikal. Presuposisi eksistensial mendominasi, seperti pada lirik "Walau sudah janda" yang mengimplikasikan bahwa seseorang pernah menikah sebelumnya, sedangkan presuposisi leksikal juga ditemukan dalam beberapa lirik lagu tersebut. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa stereotip implisit mengenai perempuan, seksualitas, dan gender yang ditampilkan dalam lirik turut membentuk pandangan masyarakat terhadap lagu tersebut di luar makna literalnya.

Kata Kunci: *Kontroversi; Lirik Lagu; Makna Implisit; Pragmatik; Presuposisi; Stereotip Gender.*

Abstract

The presupposition in the lyrics of Erika song was analyzed by applying fairy tale theory of presupposition from George Yule, a pragmatic. This research attempts to analyze the species of presupposition in the song and also describe how implicit assumptions impact audience interpretation and public controversy. Qualitative descriptive is used in this study because the implicit meaning of lyrics tells by song. Data Source Lyrics of "Erika" or "Goyang Erika, Cinta 25 Karat" Orkes semi dangdut (OSD) Himpunan Mahasiswa Tambang (HMT) Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB). Data were collected by documentation and library research methods. The analysis exposes two forms of presupposition, namely, existential and lexical presupposition. The first presupposition is existential presupposition which dominates as in the lyrics "Walau sudah janda" that implies having been married before, whereas Lexical Presuppositions can be found in this lyric. Their findings suggest that implicit stereotypes about women, sexuality, and gender shown in the lyrics also shape people views of the song beyond its literal meaning.

Keywords: *Controversy; Gender Stereotypes; Implicit Meaning; Lyrics; Pragmatics; Presupposition*

INTRODUCTION

Language is not only used as a tool of communication, but also as a medium to convey ideas, emotions, assumptions, and social values. In communication, people often convey meanings indirectly through implicit expressions that require interpretation from listeners or audiences. Pragmatics studies meaning based on context and speaker interpretation (Leech et al., 1984). Recent studies also show that pragmatic analysis is widely used to uncover implied meanings in media discourse and song lyrics (Mukminin, 2024; Ramadhan & Riansyah, 2025). This means that understanding language is not limited to literal meaning only, but also includes implied meanings and underlying assumptions embedded within utterances. One of the important concepts in pragmatics is presupposition, which refers to assumptions considered true by speakers before producing an utterance (Yule, 1996). Presupposition becomes important because audiences often understand meaning not only from what is explicitly stated, but also from assumptions implied in language.

In the digital era, songs and performances can easily spread through social media and become subjects of public discussion. Viral cultural content often creates different interpretations among audiences because each individual may understand implied meanings differently depending on social and cultural context (Jenkins, 2006). One of the controversial issues that recently attracted public attention was the circulation of the song "Erika", also known as "Goyang Erika, Cinta 25 Karat." The song is associated with Orkes Semi Dangdut (OSD), a music group affiliated with Himpunan Mahasiswa Tambang (HMT) at Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB), and has been performed as part of an organizational tradition since the late 1970s. Although the song has existed for decades, it gained renewed public attention after recordings of its performance during orientation activities circulated widely on social media.

The controversy surrounding the song emerged because many audiences considered several parts of the lyrics inappropriate and containing elements related to the objectification of women. However, others argued that the song should only be understood as part of entertainment and organizational tradition. This situation reflects changing social perspectives toward language, humor, and gender-related issues because representation influences how audiences interpret cultural products and social identities (Hall, 1997). Expressions that were previously considered normal or acceptable are now increasingly questioned, especially by younger generations who are more aware of issues related to sexism, objectification, and gender sensitivity because language may reproduce gender ideology and unequal power relations (Lazar, 2011). Recent studies have also shown that song lyrics may contribute to the reproduction of gender bias and sexist representations, influencing audience perceptions of women and gender roles (Betti et al., 2023).

The controversy surrounding the song "Erika" shows that the issue does not only lie in the literal meaning of the lyrics, but also in the assumptions implied within the language. Audiences may respond differently because they interpret not only what is directly stated, but also what is indirectly suggested through diction and context. These hidden assumptions can be analyzed through presupposition theory. In this study, presupposition becomes relevant because the controversy mainly emerged from meanings that audiences understood implicitly through contextual and social interpretation.

Within the framework of pragmatics, presupposition refers to assumptions that are implicitly accepted as true within an utterance (Yule, 1996). These assumptions function as the basis upon which meaning is interpreted. Levinson (1983) states that presupposition is an important aspect of pragmatic analysis because it reveals the relationship between language, cognition, and social context. Therefore, analyzing presupposition in song lyrics provides a useful approach to understanding how implicit meanings are constructed and how they may influence audience interpretation.

Several previous studies have discussed presupposition in song lyrics and media discourse. Hidayat et al. (2025) found that song lyrics often contain hidden meanings and assumptions that influence audience interpretation through implicature and presupposition analysis in Adam Lambert's *Fever*. Similarly, Ginting et al. (2024) found that various types of presuppositions contribute to the construction of implicit meanings in song lyrics and influence audience interpretation through unstated assumptions

embedded in language. Simanjuntak et al. (2025) also revealed that presupposition analysis can uncover implied meanings embedded within the selected song lyrics of Hendry Moodie's album. In addition, studies discussing sexist language and gender bias in songs indicate that language in musical works may normalize certain assumptions and perspectives toward women (Betti et al., 2023). These previous studies support the relevance of using presupposition theory to analyze the song "Erika" because the controversy surrounding the song is closely related to hidden assumptions and audience interpretation.

However, most previous studies mainly focused on general song lyrics and media discourse. Previous studies have also examined language use, discourse interpretation, and social meaning in various media contexts, including public discussions, online interactions, and cultural texts (Lana et al., 2024; Wiryandanu et al., 2024). Nevertheless, only limited studies discuss controversial Indonesian songs that triggered public debate related to gender sensitivity and audience interpretation. Therefore, this study attempts to fill this gap by analyzing presupposition in the song "Erika" and examining how implicit assumptions within the lyrics contribute to public response.

This study focuses on presupposition because the issue in the song "Erika" is closely connected to assumptions implied within the lyrics. Some audiences interpreted certain lyrics as containing problematic assumptions related to women and social attitudes. These assumptions were not always expressed directly, but were understood through context and language use in the song. Therefore, presupposition theory is considered suitable for uncovering the hidden meanings behind the lyrics and explaining why the song triggered various public reactions.

Based on these considerations, this study addresses the following research questions: What types of presupposition are found in the lyrics of the song "Erika", and how do these presuppositions convey implicit meanings to audiences? The objectives of this study are to identify the types of presupposition found in the lyrics of the song "Erika" and to analyze the implicit meanings conveyed through those presuppositions. This study is expected to contribute to pragmatic studies, especially in understanding how presupposition functions in controversial song lyrics and how hidden assumptions may influence audience interpretation and public response.

THEORY REVIEW

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that studies meaning based on context and speaker interpretation. According to Leech et al. (1984), pragmatics examines how language is used in communication and how meaning can change depending on situation, speaker intention, and listener interpretation. Similarly, (Yule, 1996) explains that pragmatics is concerned with the interpretation of meaning communicated by speakers and understood by listeners. Through pragmatics, language is not only analyzed from its literal meaning, but also from implied meanings and assumptions embedded within utterances. Recent studies have demonstrated that pragmatic analysis remains relevant in examining language use in media discourse, public communication, and song lyrics because meaning is often shaped by context and audience interpretation (Mukminin, 2024; Wiryandanu et al., 2024).

One of the important concepts in pragmatics is presupposition. (Yule, 1996) defines presupposition as an assumption that speakers consider true before producing an utterance. Presupposition allows listeners to understand meanings that are not explicitly stated in language. Levinson (1983) also states that presupposition is closely related to the relationship between language, cognition, and social context because speakers often rely on shared assumptions in communication. Therefore, presupposition becomes an important aspect in analyzing hidden meanings within discourse, including song lyrics. Previous studies have shown that presupposition analysis can reveal assumptions that are not explicitly stated but are understood by audiences through contextual interpretation (Ginting et al., 2024; Simanjuntak et al., 2025).

Presupposition is commonly found in media discourse, advertisements, literary works, and song lyrics because speakers or writers often rely on shared assumptions to communicate implied meanings. In song lyrics, presupposition may influence how audiences interpret emotional, social, and ideological

messages conveyed through language. Through presupposition analysis, researchers can identify meanings that are indirectly communicated and understand how language shapes audience interpretation. Studies on song lyrics have also shown that audiences often construct meaning through denotative and connotative interpretations, indicating that song lyrics frequently convey meanings beyond their literal expressions (Atuzzahro et al., 2025).

This study applies presupposition theory proposed by Yule (1996). The research mainly focuses on lexical presupposition and factive presupposition because these two types are considered the most relevant for analyzing the implicit meanings contained in the song "Erika." Lexical presupposition occurs when certain words trigger unstated meanings or assumptions. In this type, the use of particular lexical items indirectly suggests additional meanings understood by listeners. Meanwhile, factive presupposition refers to assumptions that are treated as true within an utterance. Certain expressions may lead audiences to interpret information as factual or socially accepted. Furthermore, representations of gender in cultural texts often contain implicit assumptions regarding social roles, power relations, and identity construction, which may influence audience interpretation of a text (Nasution et al., 2026). These two types of presupposition are considered relevant because the controversy surrounding the song "Erika" is closely connected to implied meanings and hidden assumptions conveyed through diction and contextual interpretation. In addition, language use in public discourse often generates different interpretations and social responses depending on how audiences perceive implicit meanings and assumptions embedded in communication (Butsainah & Asyhar, 2024; Lana et al., 2024).

These two types of presupposition are considered relevant because the controversy surrounding the song "Erika" is closely connected to implied meanings and hidden assumptions conveyed through diction and contextual interpretation. Through presupposition analysis, this study attempts to reveal how language in the song lyrics constructs implicit meanings that may influence audience interpretation and public response.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive method because the research focused on analyzing implicit meanings and assumptions found in the lyrics of the song "Erika." Qualitative research is appropriate for studies that aim to interpret social and language phenomena based on meaning, context, and audience interpretation rather than numerical data. According to Busetto et al. (2020), qualitative research helps researchers understand social meanings and interpret human experiences in specific contexts. Through this method, the researchers analyzed how presuppositions embedded in the song lyrics conveyed hidden meanings that contributed to public controversy and audience responses.

The data source of this study was the lyrics of the song "Erika," also known as "Goyang Erika, Cinta 25 Karat," which is associated with Orkes Semi Dangdut (OSD) of Himpunan Mahasiswa Tambang (HMT) at Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB). The data consisted of utterances, words, and expressions in the song lyrics that potentially contained presuppositions. The researchers focused on lyric excerpts that were considered relevant to implicit assumptions, audience interpretation, and controversial meanings related to the public discussion surrounding the song.

The data were collected using documentation and library research methods. The documentation method was conducted by collecting the lyrics of the song "Erika" and reviewing digital content related to its circulation on social media and orientation performances. Meanwhile, library research was used to obtain supporting references related to pragmatics, implicit meaning, song lyric analysis, and gender-related language issues from books, journals, and previous studies. Tomaszewski et al. (2020) state that library research is important in qualitative studies because it supports theoretical understanding and contextual interpretation of research data.

The data analysis in this study followed qualitative analysis procedures consisting of data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. As explained by Aspers & Corte (2021), qualitative analysis focuses on interpreting meanings and identifying patterns within social

phenomena. In this study, the researchers first collected the lyrics and supporting information related to the controversy surrounding the song. Next, the researchers selected lyric excerpts containing presuppositions and classified them into several categories based on their implicit meanings. The findings were then interpreted by analyzing how the hidden assumptions embedded within the lyrics influenced audience interpretation and public responses.

The analysis focused on identifying hidden assumptions implied within the lyrics and explaining how these assumptions contributed to different audience reactions. Each lyric excerpt was analyzed based on contextual meaning, diction, and implied assumptions. Through this method, the study aimed to reveal that the controversy surrounding the song "Erika" was influenced not only by the literal meaning of the lyrics, but also by the implicit meanings understood by audiences through social and cultural interpretation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of presupposition analysis found in the song "Erika" based on the presupposition theory proposed by George Yule. Based on the analysis, two types of presupposition were found in the song, namely existential presupposition and lexical presupposition. Existential presupposition became the most dominant type, while lexical presupposition was only found in one datum. Meanwhile, the other types of presupposition were not found in this song. The data findings are classified based on the types of presupposition and presented in the following table.

Table 1 Types of Presupposition in the Song "Erika"

No	Lyrics	Types	Presupposed Meaning
1	"Pengalaman tak terlupa, waktu aku mahasiswa"	Existential	The speaker was a university student who had an unforgettable experience.
2	"Kecantol di Surabaya, janda muda nama Erika"	Existential	There is a young widow named Erika in Surabaya.
3	"Erika buka celana"	Existential	Erika exists and performs an activity.
4	"Oh, goyang Erika luar biasa"	Existential	Erika has an extraordinary dance movement
5	"Oh, lebar pinggulnya hampir sedepa"	Existential	Erika has wide hips.
6	"Pagi-pagi Erika mandi"	Existential	Erika exists and takes a bath in the morning.
7	"Walau sudah janda"	Lexical	Erika had been married before

Datum 1

"Pengalaman tak terlupa, waktu aku mahasiswa"

This lyric is categorized as existential presupposition because it presupposes that the speaker was once a university student who had an unforgettable experience.

Datum 2

"Kecantol di Surabaya, janda muda nama Erika"

This lyric is categorized as existential presupposition because it presupposes the existence of a young widow named Erika in Surabaya.

Datum 3

"Erika buka celana"

This lyric is categorized as existential presupposition because it presupposed the existence of Erika as a person doing an activity.

Datum 4

“Oh, goyang Erika luar biasa”

This lyric is categorized as existential presupposition because it presupposed the existence of Erika has an extraordinary dance movement.

Datum 5

“Oh, lebar pinggulnya hampir sedepa”

This lyric is categorized as existential presupposition because it presupposed Erika has a wide hips.

Datum 6

“Pagi-pagi Erika mandi”

This lyric is categorized as existential presupposition because it presupposed the existence of Erika and doing an activity in the morning.

Datum 7

“Walau sudah janda”

This lyric is categorized as lexical presupposition because the word ‘sudah’ indicates a previous condition, presupposing that Erika had been married before.

Based on the findings, there are two types of presuppositions in the song “Erika”: existential presuppositions and lexical presuppositions. The most dominant type is the existential presupposition, while only one instance of a lexical presupposition was found. Meanwhile, no other types of presuppositions were found in this song. The dominance of existential presupposition indicates that most of the song’s lyrics build assumptions regarding the existence of the character “Erika,” her physical appearance, and the activities she engages in. This suggests that the song focuses more on portraying a female figure through physical descriptions and a narrative framed as humor.

Through the use of presupposition, listeners are indirectly led to accept the character “Erika” as a real person with specific characteristics, such as having wide hips, an extraordinary sway, and the status of a widow. These assumptions are not explained in detail but are directly implied through the song’s lyrics. As a result, listeners can form a mental image of Erika and imagine the situations depicted in the song based on the implied meanings provided. In this case, presupposition helps convey implicit meaning because the information is not presented directly but through assumptions that are presumed to be understood by the listener.

Furthermore, the lyric “Walau sudah janda, sempitnya masih terasa” contains a lexical presupposition because the word “sudah” assumes that Erika was previously married. However, the presupposition in this lyric not only conveys information about Erika’s status as a widow but also carries certain social assumptions regarding widows and sexuality. The song indirectly builds the assumption that a widow has certain sexual experiences, then uses this as part of the song’s humor. Thus, presupposition functions not only as a linguistic element but also carries social values and assumptions that can influence how listeners understand the song’s meaning.

The presuppositions in this song also influence listeners’ interpretations of it. Because much of the meaning is conveyed implicitly, each listener may have a different understanding depending on how they interpret the assumptions in the lyrics. Some listeners may view this song as a form of entertainment or humor because some of the lyrics are presented in a casual and exaggerated manner. For example, the lyrics “Erika buka celana” and “Walau sudah janda sempitnya masih terasa” use sexual and vulgar descriptions as part of the comedic elements. The use of existential presupposition allows listeners to immediately accept Erika’s existence and the situation depicted in the song without lengthy explanations. As a result, listeners can quickly grasp the song’s context and catch the humor intended.

However, some listeners may find this song vulgar or even demeaning to women. This is because the song focuses heavily on women’s bodies and activities that suggest sexuality. Lyrics such as “Oh, lebar pinggulnya hampir sedepa” and “Erika buka celana” demonstrate how women’s bodies and activities are made the central focus of the song. The use of explicit language makes some listeners feel that women are represented solely through their physical and sexual aspects. In this case, the presupposition causes listeners to automatically accept these descriptions as a normal part of the song, even though some people might consider them inappropriate or demeaning to women.

In addition to being considered vulgar, this song also reinforces stereotypes about women, particularly widows. In the song, widowhood is not only used as a social identity but is also linked to sexual experience. In the lyric “Walau sudah janda, sempitnya masih terasa,” listeners are led to associate widowhood with specific sexual abilities or experiences. Consequently, the widow in the song is represented not based on her personality or identity as an individual, but through sexual aspects that are then used as material for humor. This indicates that the presuppositions in the song not only convey implied meanings but also shape specific social assumptions and stereotypes about women through how listeners interpret the song’s lyrics.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the lyrics of “Erika” contain existential and lexical presuppositions that construct implicit assumptions about women. These assumptions are not directly stated but are understood by audiences through contextual interpretation. The controversy surrounding the song emerges from the interpretation of these hidden meanings, particularly in relation to contemporary awareness of gender sensitivity and sexist language. This study also demonstrates how implicit meanings in song lyrics can influence public discourse and reflect changing social norms regarding gender objectification.

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